

DUXBURY BAY DREDGING

Deepening the waters of Duxbury Harbor

By John Chaffee
The Patriot Ledger

DUXBURY — The 94-foot-high crane looms over the inner harbor with its giant bucket scooping 18 cubic yards of silt at a time.

"I can almost reach out and touch it," said Harbormaster Donald Beers, who is anticipating the completion of the long-awaited harbor dredging project.

With the dredge barge in operation 24 hours a day, seven days a week, loading each of five scows with 2,300 cubic yards of silt, work in the harbor's 21-acre anchorage should be completed in the next two or three days, Beers said.

Then the crew from Weeks Marine of Camden, N.J., will begin work on four "piggyback" dredging projects. The "piggyback" description is used because the projects will be done now to take advantage of the equipment being in the harbor.

"They should be done and out of here by Nov. 1," Beers said.

He said the Duxbury Yacht Club will pay \$60,000 to have an estimated 8,000 cubic yards of silt removed from the area around its pier, the town will pay \$30,000 to have 4,000 cubic yards taken from the area around Town Pier, and Bayside Marine and Battelle Laboratories will pay \$25,000 each to have about 3,000 cubic yards taken from their respective Snug Harbor waterfront areas.

Despite being slowed by the three hurri

Please see DREDGING — Page 18



Derek Pruitt photo

Craig Hysler, left, of the Army Corps of Engineers, Peter Smey, the Duxbury harbormaster's executive officer, center, and Harbormaster Don Beers on a pier in Duxbury Harbor, with dredging under way in the background.

Harbor dredging nears completion

■ DREDGING

Continued from Page 18

canes and two northeasters since dredging began Aug. 12, the project has been "picture-perfect," Beers said.

Craig Hysler, construction representative for the Army Corps of Engineers agreed.

"It's gone real well — better than most dredging projects," he said.

Starting with the crane barge, two scows and one tugboat, Weeks started the project by digging the way down a mile-long entrance channel into the anchorage.

Because the channel silt was hard, sandy material, Weeks began by using a hard-digging bucket that held 9 cubic yards.

Upon reaching the anchorage, where the silt is softer, almost powder-like, Weeks switched to the larger bucket, and three more scows and two additional tugboats arrived on the scene.

For the past few weeks, except when the waters in Cape Cod Bay

were too rough, the tugs have been towing scows continuously to the dump site 23 miles away.

While the three tugboats are at sea towing a scow to or from the dump site, about eight miles off Wellfleet, the other two scows are on either side of the crane barge being filled with silt.

An estimated 250,000 cubic yards is expected to have been removed from the entrance channel and anchorage by the time the project is completed.

Weeks bid \$1.8 million to the Army Corps of Engineers to do what Beers calls the "federal project" — dredging the entrance channel and anchorage.

The "piggyback" projects will be paid for separately.

The entrance channel has been dredged so that it is at least 100 feet wide and 9 feet deep at low tide, Beers said. The anchorage will be dredged to a low-tide depth of at least 8 feet.

"We really have no idea how big the anchorage will be when Weeks

finishes, but boat owners will be very pleasantly surprised when they come back to their moorings in the spring," Beers said.

In the 20 years since the harbor was last dredged, the gradual accumulation of silt shrank the anchorage from all sides and from the bottom, Beers said.

"We never cut back on the number of moorings, but it got pretty crowded out there the past few years," he said.

Boat owners will have a lot more room next spring, Beers promised.

To make way for the dredging equipment, Beers and his staff, with the help of three local boat yards, moved 160 deep-water moorings, 350 flat-water moorings and 510 boats out of the anchorage in three days in late August.

Thanks to the dredging, it may be possible to accommodate a few additional boats in the anchorage next year, Beers said.

"We have the names of about 500 boat owners on a 10-12-year waiting list," he said.